

A group of eight young adults, four men and four women, are smiling and posing for a photo from the back of a white pickup truck. They are dressed in casual summer clothing. The truck's bed is open, and the background shows a sunny outdoor setting with greenery and a person in a blue dress walking in the distance. A white curved arrow points from the 'i' in 'Immersion' to the 'i' in 'mission' at the bottom of the image.

1-Month SOUTH AFRICA IMMER*S*ION

experience **mission**



What is **IMMERSION**?

IMMERSION is an opportunity for young adults (age 18-30) to step outside of the normal cadence of their lives in order to gain a broader picture of: 1) the world around you, 2) the way God works in that world, and 3) the value of relationships and quality service alongside people whose lives are just as valuable as your own.

Simply put, **IMMERSION** is about focusing on the “how we do it” of international ministry and service rather than just “what we do.” Our central focus is on the importance of **authentic relationships** as the keystone to healthy ministry, and engaging in what it means to truly “love our neighbor” as people of privilege in the 21st century.

Teams spend their time equally split between service opportunities, cultural immersion in the community, and relationship building with community partners and host families. This means there is plenty of space to give your time and attention to others—a *necessary part of doing missions well*—prioritizing people over the simply seeking out projects to complete.

SOUTH AFRICA *Partners*



1-Month South Africa IMMERSION teams will be serving in Centurion and Pretoria East, South Africa alongside local partners and EM Africa Directors, **Hein & Helene van Wyk** (*with team member and grankids above*), and EM Africa support staff, **Danieko & Megan van Wyk** (*above right*).

The van Wyk's are native Namibians, but they have lived and served in South Africa for more than 20 years, holding dual citizenship. They have been working with Experience Mission since 2011, since the very beginning of the IMMERSION program, and now also lead trips



for two-week mission teams in South Africa and Namibia.

Over the years, Hein and Helene have made incredible partnerships all over Southern Africa, including Kairos, where your team will serve and learn for the month.



Serving at **KAIROS**

IMMERSION teams coming to South Africa for 1-month should plan to serve alongside **Kairos**, a local ministry in Pretoria East.

Kairos has many different outreaches and invests in their local community of Pretoria East. Teams connect with school-aged children, serving meals at school, helping at after-school programs, working as teachers' assistants, and more.

Your team will serve with the **food and clothing distribution center**, helping to sort clothing donations and pack food bags to distribute to the communities in need. You may also be involved in working with the elderly and individuals experiencing homelessness.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

Monday through Friday, you can expect to volunteer at Kairos from 8:00am to 4:30-5:30pm. **Saturday** mornings to **Sunday** afternoons will be spent debriefing at the van Wyk's home, for downtime to relax and be together as a team and having access to WiFi. The van Wyks love rugby, coffee, and have a swimming pool in their backyard! Pack a swimsuit if you are there in the warmer months (South Africa's seasons are opposite to the US.!)

You may or may not attend a weekly church service on Sundays. This will be determined by the EM Africa staff as they solidify your specific trip itinerary.

**Schedule subject to change*





SAFETY

Measures

Safety is a huge priority for the IMMERSION program! We are up to date on all potential **safety concerns** in the countries where teams volunteer and would never send a team to a location where we have active concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Experience Mission local staff and partners are **experienced residents** or welcome guests in the communities you are serving in, and they communicate to all team members the **safest way** to move about during their time on the program. Regular communication is also established between partners, team leaders, and EM U.S. Staff, allowing for quick responses to any emergencies should they arise.

For medical issues, IMMERSION team leaders are **CPR/First Aid** certified, and carry **trauma**

medical kits equipped to deal with a wide range of injuries and ailments.

In the case of a larger emergency, EM staff members will **support team members** by helping them communicate with home and making sure they get to a place to receive care.

Often, local **medical clinics** are a short distance from where team members are staying. However, outside of big cities, large hospitals can often be several hours away by vehicle. Team members would not be left to do this on their own.

To ensure medical care is readily accessible, EM secures **travel medical/evacuation insurance** for all team members. Participants are also required to come with a **Personal Emergency Fund**—a debit or

credit card with \$1,500 available and \$300 of reserve cash—in case they were to have a medical issue requiring upfront payment or need to **travel home** from the program unexpectedly. This amount may seem high, but it's purely a precaution. Most team members do not touch their emergency funds while on the trip.

Preventatively, during initial training, all team members are encouraged to enroll with **STEP** (Safe Traveler Enrollment Program) through the U.S. State Department. This allows team members and staff to receive official travel alerts if there is an issue in the region including political protests, civil unrest, increased crime, weather alerts, natural disasters, terrorism, or specific threats for foreign travelers.

An **EM emergency phone line** is also available to all emergency contacts.



HOUSING & Accommodations

Team members will spend most nights on the program staying with **local host families** in Centurion.

All families have been vetted personally by the van Wyks, and most are highly-experienced hosts, engaging with EM mission trip participants for 10+ years.

Housing accommodations are comfortable, with a bed and a shared bathroom and shower. Depending on your team's size and the host family accommodations, you may be in a host home with another team member or by yourself.

